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## **Istook Leads Oklahoma Educators On High-Tech Education Field Trip**

*Washington, DC* – Friday, Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) leads a group of Oklahoma education leaders, including State School Superintendent Sandy Garrett, to study how hand-held computers might revolutionize education in Oklahoma. Istook organized the trip to tour an Illinois school district where every high school student is using a personal handheld computer. It's the largest such project in the country, and Istook thinks Oklahoma could benefit by going even farther.

In that district, in three high schools, 65 teachers, and 1700 students each use a Palm III personal digital assistant (PDA) for their daily schoolwork. Istook and the other state leaders will visit classrooms, view demonstrations of the technology, talk with students, and hear from teachers and administrators about the program.

**“Very soon, every textbook, every assignment and every class note--plus multimedia and a lot more--will fit into the palm of a student's hand. Using this technology can give Oklahoma students the lead for the high-tech careers of the future. If we start now, we can take the national lead in using this in education. The potential is so enormous that it can't be overstated,”** said Istook. **“Our schools may go full-circle back to a slate that students write on, except this time the slate is also a computer that each one carries instead of a backpack loaded with textbooks and notebooks. And the cost won't be much more than we already pay to buy books.”**

Students in District 230 use their PDAs for everything from dictionaries for Spanish class, journal entries for English class, and graphing calculators for physics and trigonometry, to special software that records and graphs data for biology projects. This technology offers many cost-saving possibilities including e-textbooks that can be updated easily without expensive printing and shipping.

Attendees with Istook on his trip to Illinois include:

Sandy Garrett--Oklahoma State Superintendent of Public Schools  
Dr. Phil Applegate – Office of State Superintendent of Public Schools  
Mr. Joe Kitchens--Western Heights School District Superintendent  
Mr. Steve Finch-- Director of Technology for the Oklahoma City School District  
Mr. Steve Shiever-- Frontier Public Schools- Red Rock

**"Oklahoma can take a unique lead using this technology,”** said Istook. **“Those who jump in first will enjoy the most benefits. It means students better prepared for high-paying work, businesses attracted to a place on the cutting edge of technology, and an improved standard of living for all.”**